

***The Auburn
Adventist Academy
Story***

***The Case Statement for
Auburn's Building on Excellence
Capital Campaign***

The Auburn Adventist Academy Story

An Intentional Beginning

Once upon a time, Auburn Adventist Academy was just an idea. It didn't have a location. There were no buildings. And there was no money to get started.

Then along came a handful of visionaries who knew what a difference it would make to build a Seventh-day Adventist boarding high school in Western Washington. They spent a year trying to choose the right place to build. Then they found it—a grassy plateau in the foothills of Mt. Rainier that overlooked the farmland of the Green River Valley. They imagined the buildings they would need to build . . . to begin, only an administration building that would include classrooms, library, chapel, kitchen, dining room and residence halls on either side for the men and ladies. It was a good plan, and it would meet the needs of dozens of young people in the region, preparing them for service to the Lord for the rest of their lives. But how to accomplish it?

Elder George Enoch oversaw the raising of the money, and in 1919 the doors opened and the ministry of Auburn Adventist Academy—then called Western Washington Missionary Academy—began. C.J. Goodman was one of the first students. "I can well remember the opening day of school," he says, "and the faculty wending their way to the rostrum through saw horses and piles of lumber." Eighteen months later, two weeks before the close of the school term in 1921, a fire destroyed the entire administration building. This could easily have been the end of the academy. Now more funds were needed to rebuild, and many people throughout the region were discouraged. But again, the vision for an Adventist school for young people prevailed, and under the leadership of principal L.C. Wilcox plans were laid immediately for rebuilding the academy. School started on time in 1921, in a new administration building along with a separate girls' dormitory.

Since those difficult beginnings, Auburn Adventist Academy has survived and grown through another fire, four wars, changes in staffing and leadership, a new campus, two name changes, and enrollment ups and downs. Today the vision that young people should receive a Christian education and develop a passion for serving God is still very much the same. Had it not been for

the men who over 80 years ago had a good idea and a plan, and who put their plan into action by raising money, Auburn Adventist Academy probably would not exist today. This school would not have shaped the lives of more than 6,000 young people who have attended over the years. In a very real way, their vision changed the world.

That Vision Continues

Today, that vision continues with the desire to make Auburn a life-changing and excellent place for young people to receive an education. Doing so requires a new kind of leadership and investment—from school leaders, alumni, and conference church members. In 1995, a vision for continuing Auburn's ministry in the 21st century was created. More than 300 academy shareholders met together to learn about the academy's past and present, and to plot a course for its future. Out of that "Vision for Today and Tomorrow" weekend conference, a master plan for the academy was born and today, the operating board and school leadership are doing their part to be sure the master plan is followed. "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail" goes the cliché, and we take that seriously at Auburn, especially in a day where Adventist schools around the world are struggling to survive financially. The school's master plan includes goals and plans in the areas of spiritual atmosphere, academic programs, land and facilities, and finances. The commitment of time and leadership from volunteers has not only helped to create a master plan, but also to begin turning vision into reality. Talented volunteers—engineers, land developers, architects, contractors, educators, consultants and more—have given their expertise to the cause of Christian education at Auburn.

Thanks to these efforts, in the five short years since 1995 Auburn has seen increasing enrollment, significant operating budget gains and a positive cash flow. The most recent school evaluation gave the academy high marks in all areas, and especially commended the school's board and administration for having a master plan. In 1998, the academy received the Academy Award of Excellence—recognizing it for excellence in a variety of areas and distinguishing it from all other academies nationwide. Because of Auburn's master plan, significant land development is possible, and a business partnership with *Generations*, of Portland, Ore. has been established which will soon result in a 278-unit retirement community and assisted living center located on academy property. These kinds of accomplishments secure the future of the academy and ensure

that young people will not only have a school to attend, but opportunities for employment that will allow them to pay for their education. But this is only the beginning.

A Campaign is Born

The next step to continuing Auburn's progress is renewing the campus in specific ways so the academy can continue serving the needs of the growing dormitory and village student populations. A capital fund raising campaign can provide the money needed for major facility additions and improvements, allowing excellence to continue.

Originally called South Hall when it was built in 1946, the girls' dormitory is badly in need of replacement. Today, the all-wood structure with brick veneer is not only a safety hazard, but is no longer adequate for the electrical needs and lifestyles of the young women. A new residence hall will make safety and accessibility a priority, with improvements to the living spaces and new common areas like an easily accessible worship room, study room and computer lab, a lobby to entertain guests and adequate laundry and kitchen facilities.

Across campus, the current layout and organization of the administration building limits the academy's use of technology in the learning process, and is not meeting the needs of a growing village student population. Library space, a guidance center, and an area for student services must be added. In a day where the academy is required to accomplish so much with limited resources it is important to use staff time wisely, and to maximize classroom space and technology resources. Classrooms and administrative offices could be reorganized for better teamwork within departments and maximum efficiency. Reworking the existing chapel to include the music department and a performance-quality auditorium, while remodeling the former music building and administrative wing to accommodate departments like the library, guidance center and a student center will provide solutions for long-standing problems. In all, a campaign to renew the campus in these major ways will require raising \$8 million for the academy. It's an exciting challenge. And it's all about Building on Excellence.

Can it really be done?

Will a campaign for Auburn really be successful? It will be a success because we are building upon past achievements. The academy has raised money from individuals since the very beginning. However, since 1992 the academy has employed a full-time development

professional vested with the work of developing relationships with those who will support the school's ministry. The development program has grown steadily. Today, thousands of people make gifts to the academy each school year. "Major gifts" are no longer \$100 or \$500 gifts, but are \$5,000, \$25,000 and \$100,000 gifts, such as the ones given this year. With the addition of class agent programs, the Hearts of Gold auction, the development council and land use committee, the academy continues to find ways to involve hundreds of volunteers in the ministry of Christian education each school year. With the leadership and advocacy of volunteers comes a broadened base of support and an increase in gifts from those outside the immediate circle of supporters—now, the academy sees community members and local businesses caring about young people at Auburn, too. Overall, development efforts have grown from raising \$126,000 in 1992 to \$325,000—with at least \$225,00 going directly to provide scholarships and operating needs—annually. This growth has taken place because of the growing interest and commitment of volunteers, alumni, parents, staff, board members and conference church members. Together, they have risen to the challenges of continuing an excellent program at Auburn Adventist Academy. Together, they can make Auburn's Building on Excellence campaign a true success.

The academy board is committed to taking the next step in fulfilling the vision for Auburn and launching a successful campaign. These school trustees have invested in school leadership by recruiting and retaining a principal with a proven track record of success and leadership. Keith Hallam came to the academy in 1995 from Kansas where he had served as an academy principal. His experience as a teacher and administrator, and his Master's degree in education administration give him the credentials and experience to lead Auburn into a new century. Keith was instrumental in creating the school's master plan and continues to be a major advocate of master planning and volunteer leadership. He has put together an administrative team that works well together and manages not only many of the day-to-day operations, but knows how to build consensus with conference and volunteer leadership to move the academy forward. As a campaign begins, additional staffing in the development office and business office makes the Building on Excellence campaign realistic and poised for success.

It's all about the Students

The real excitement and driving force behind the campaign is its long-range impact on students. As fund raising dollars increase, as debt is retired, as buildings are upgraded and renewed

enrollment increases. As enrollment grows and budgets increase it allows for new thinking and planning and programs that impact students not just academically and spiritually, but personally, too. The Building on Excellence campaign to renew Auburn Adventist Academy is a natural outgrowth of the hard work that shareholders, board members, administration and staff put into creating a master plan for the school. This kind of progress is contagious: As the alumni, parents, church members, and community see the excitement of expanding programs and enrollments they will begin joining forces with the academy—allowing the school to reach even loftier goals.

The Role of the Campaign

Auburn Adventist Academy has been a leader in many areas since developing its master plan nearly five years ago. Actually, merely developing a plan showed great leadership: Auburn has been one of the few academies to develop a comprehensive master plan. Auburn has taken the lead in technology, integrating computers in the classroom and hardwiring the campus for ready Internet access. The school has insisted on a dedicated chaplain; and has given students important leadership roles like coordinating outreach options each Wednesday nights and on weekends, organizing church services and vespers, and serving on the Academy Church board. Auburn has been a leader in partnering with business: On-campus businesses provide students with jobs and a steady flow of income, and the partnership with *Generations* is an exciting new step in this direction. Indeed, the Building on Excellence campaign itself is another example of leadership and vision on the part of the board and administration of the academy. This campaign, well-thought out, planned over a long time period and now ready to begin; is the most ambitious fund-raising campaign ever attempted by an Adventist academy. Auburn is ready. Its constituents are ready. Auburn is continuing to lead.